

Breaking the Silence

A Jewish Healing Service for Survivors of Abuse and Trauma and the Community

As Jews, we understand viscerally from our historical experience what it is to be victims of persecution. Time and again, we have demanded that the voices of victims be heard, that their pain be acknowledged, and that justice prevail.

Yet in our own midst many have suffered silently for far too long, victims of abuse and trauma whose pain and suffering have gone unacknowledged, whose stories have not been believed, and whose perpetrators have been shielded from suffering the appropriate consequences their behavior warrants. Silence and inaction have re-victimized those traumatized by abuse by inflicting fear, shame, and guilt.

As a community, we have participated in a conspiracy of silence: denial of the truth of abuse in our midst, and the silencing of victims, and our own individual choice of silence when fear or disbelief take precedence over informed response.

The silence must end. In the days leading to Rosh Hashanah, a time when all truths are laid bare and inscribed before us in the Book of Life, we will come together as a community in solidarity, openness, and honesty to offer healing to those who have suffered abuse and trauma. The shofar we began blowing each morning in Elul is a wake-up call to us all: to listen, to truly hear, to accept terrible truths, and most of all to respond with compassion for victims of trauma rather than tolerance for perpetrators of abuse.

- This year may the blast of the shofar herald healing for those who have survived trauma and seek wholeness.
- This year, may the blast of the shofar break the silence and pierce our hearts, calling us to respond to those who have survived abuse.
- This year, may the sound of the shofar trumpet the end of silence, the end of denial, the end of tolerating abuse in our midst.

Be there, be counted, be heard, begin healing.

The Baltimore Board of Rabbis extends an invitation to everyone in the community to join us for a **Healing Service** on **Sunday, September 13, 2009**, from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Community Room at the Weinberg Park Heights JCC, 5700 Park Heights Avenue.

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